The Department has entered into partnership with SBI Mutual Funds, PNB Mutual Fund, Prudential ICICI Mutual Fund and UTI Mutual Fund for sale of mutual fund products from Post Offices. Department has also tied up with Western Union Financial Sservices International for receiving money in India from more than 190 countries in the world. Further, a tie up has also been a finalized with Oriental Insurance Company to dispense non-life insurance.

Development of postal communication services in backward areas

2502. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal for expansion and development of postal communication service network in the backward districts of the country;

(b) if so, the details of such districts;

(c) the details of financial allocation made for this purpose; and

(d) the details of target set in this respect?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Post Offices are opened subject to fulfillment of distance, population and income norms and the entire rural network is being subsidized. While there is no separate categorisation of backward districts when planning the postal network, hilly, tribal, desert and inaccessible areas are provided post offices based on population and income norms which are more liberal than those for normal rural areas; there is also flexibility to relax even the distance norm, where necessary. Details in this regard are given in the enclosed Statement (*See* below). Post Offices are being provided wherever justified, by redeploying existing resources, as required under the Tenth Plan.

(c) and (d) No separate targets or financial allocations have been fixed for backward districts in view of (a) and (b).

Statement

Norms for opening Post Offices:

1. **Norms for opening Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices:**

1.1 **Population:**

(a) **In Normal Areas:**

3000 populationi a group of villages (including the PPO village)

(b) **In Hilly, Tribal, Desert and Inaccessible Areas:**

500 population in an individual village or 1000 population in a group of villages.

1.2 **Distance:**

(a) **In Normal Areas:**

The minimum distance from the nearest existing post office will be 3 Kms.

(b) **In Hilly, Tribal, Desert and Inaccessible Areas:**

The distance limit will be the same as above except that in Hilly Areas, the minimum distance limit can be relaxed by the Directorate in cases where such relaxation is warranted by special circumstances which should be clearly explained while submitting a proposal.

1.3 **Anticipated Income:**

(a) **In Normal Areas:**

The minimum anticipated revenue will be 331/3% of the cost.

(b) **In Hilly, Tribal, Desert and Inaccessible Areas:**

The minimum anticiapted income will be 15% of the cost.

It is further to be ensured that as a result of the opening of a new post office, the loss in respect ofthe parent post office does not increase beyond the permissible limit nor is its income reduced below the minimum prescribed.

2. Criteria for upgrading/opening Departmental Sub Post Offices:

(a) In Rural Areas:

The minimum workload of the Extra Departmental Branch Post Office, proposed to be upgraded, should be five hours per day. The permissible limit of annual loss is Rs. 2400/- in Normal Rural areas and Rs. 4800/- in Tribal and Hilly areas.

It is further to be ensured that as a result of the opening of a new post office, the loss in respect of the parent post office does not increase beyond the permissible limit nor is its income reduced below the minimum prescribed.

(b) In Urban Areas:

In Urban areas, the post office should initially be selft supporting, and, at the time of the first annual review, it should show a 5% profit to be eligible for further retention.

The minimum distance between two post offices should be 1.5 Kms. in cities with a population of 20 lakhs and above, and 2 Kms. in other Urban areas. No two delivery offices, however, should be closer than 5 Kms. for each other.

Heads of Circle have powers to relax the distance condition in 10% of the cases.

A delivery Post Office in Urban Area should have a minimum of 7 Postmen's beats.

Non payment of amount by Lucknow Post Office

†2503. SHRI BHAGWATI SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that accurate and necessary information and whole amount of interest on the amount deposited is not being given by post office saving bank at G.P.O. Lucknow (U.P.) and customers are being harassed;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.